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# Letter dated 23 May 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the eighth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present letter provides information requested in that resolution on the activities of the United Nations from 25 April to 22 May 2014 related to the implementation of the resolution.

## Introduction

During the reporting period, there has been no further removal of chemical weapons material or verification activity allowing for the closure of additional chemical weapons storage and production facilities. However, the Syrian Arab Republic accessed the last site containing chemical weapons material, carried out the destruction of its residual stockpile of isopropanol, and prepared the remaining chemical material for removal as soon as security conditions permit.

At the time of issuance of this letter, a number of activities remain outstanding in order for the Syrian Arab Republic to fully eliminate its declared chemical weapons programme in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the relevant decisions of the OPCW Executive Council. These are: the removal of the remaining chemical weapons material; the destruction of structures at 12 production facilities pending an agreement on the modalities of destruction by the OPCW Executive Council; the destruction of one item of loading equipment at one production facility; and the destruction of one building located at another production facility.

The Joint Mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic continues to urge the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic to carry out all remaining activities expeditiously.

## Key developments

On 27 April 2014, the internal Syrian Arab Republic timeline for the removal of all chemical weapons material was reached with close to 8 per cent of material remaining at one storage facility inside Syrian territory. The Syrian Arab Republic had long before informed the Joint Mission that it did not have full security control



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in the area of that site, and that it had serious concerns about the safety and security of chemical weapons material convoys leaving the facility.

On 28 April 2014, the Syrian Arab Republic reported that armed opposition groups had taken control of two nearby facilities which had previously been emptied of chemical weapons material and expanded their presence in the area, rendering the remaining active storage facility inaccessible by road. The authorities further reported that a military operation was required to access the facility in order to adequately secure the area to allow the safe extraction of the chemical weapons material.

On 15 May 2014, in order to destroy the remaining quantities of isopropanol held at the site and to finalize necessary preparations for the eventual transportation of chemical weapons material to Latakia, the Syrian Arab Republic chartered an aircraft funded by the Joint Mission to airlift various equipment and packaging materials to the site.

Subsequently, the Syrian Arab Republic authorities destroyed its residual stockpile of isopropanol, and completed preparatory and packaging activities in readiness for removing the last batch of chemical weapons material. As at 20 May 2014, 7.2 per cent of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons material remained in the country, awaiting swift removal for onward destruction. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic insisted that final removal operations can be conducted solely through ground transportation when security conditions allow. Officials of the Syrian Arab Republic pledged to remove the remaining chemical material in the shortest possible time.

Further to the visit of the OPCW Technical Secretariat team from 22 to 28 April 2014, which sought to address technical discrepancies in the original declaration, a second team arrived during the reporting period to focus on subsequent amendments and verification issues. The Syrian Arab Republic extended its constructive cooperation to the Technical Secretariat team in the course of their duties.

**Activities of the Joint Mission**

The Joint Mission continued its engagement with Syrian Arab Republic officials, impressing on them the importance of accessing the site holding chemical weapons material and urging them to remove and destroy as relevant all remaining chemical weapons material. The Joint Mission continued outreach activities with contributing international partners and Member States in the region.

The security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be challenging. In Damascus, shelling and mortar attacks escalated during the reporting period, increasing the risks to Joint Mission and all United Nations personnel. On 6 May 2014, the area near the Joint Mission headquarters was hit by mortar shelling. One member of the Joint Mission national personnel and one United Nations national staff member were injured when one of the mortars landed close to their home, some 300 m from the Joint Mission headquarters.

With the destruction and removal of much of the chemical weapons programme completed, and given the volatility of the security situation, which continued to pose a significant risk to personnel, the Joint Mission initiated steps to reduce its presence inside the Syrian Arab Republic and adjust its functional

footprint to a configuration commensurate to its remaining tasks. A number of Joint Mission personnel have already returned to parent duty stations and others have transitioned to the Joint Mission's support office in Cyprus. The Joint Mission maintained its core operations in Damascus to continue verification and other activities, although it temporarily relocated personnel from Latakia to Damascus pending the resumption of removal and verification operations. The Joint Mission maintained personnel required at the port for remaining verification and inspection activities on standby.

**Conclusion**

Over the past eight months, a large part of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic has been either removed from its territory or destroyed in-country, equating to approximately 92 per cent of its chemical weapons material. Preparatory activities for the removal of the remaining quantities have been completed. Other notable achievements during the past eight months include the functional destruction of all declared chemical weapons production and mixing/filling specialized equipment, rendering it inoperable; the destruction of all unfilled munitions; the destruction of all containers previously holding mustard gas; the destruction of all isopropanol on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic; the closure of 11 out of 12 chemical weapons storage facilities; and the closure of 5 out of 18 chemical weapons production facilities. The modalities for destruction of 12 facilities are currently under review in the OPCW Executive Council. All of these activities were verified and inspected physically by Joint Mission personnel where security conditions allowed and through remote camera surveillance where security conditions did not permit the physical presence of Joint Mission personnel.

It is imperative that the Syrian Arab Republic concludes remaining removal operations as quickly as possible, as the authorities have pledged to do. However, it is now evident that some activities related to the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic will continue beyond 30 June 2014.

With this in mind, and following consultation with the Director-General of OPCW, I foresee that the Joint Mission will continue its work for a finite period of time beyond 30 June 2014, during which most of the remaining activities for the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic should be completed. This will also give sufficient time to put in place appropriate successor arrangements for OPCW to continue any residual in-country verification activities beyond this period.

I continue to be very concerned by allegations regarding the use of chlorine gas in the context of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and look forward to the results of the OPCW fact-finding mission. I call on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and all parties to the Syrian conflict to cooperate fully with the OPCW fact-finding mission in this regard.

I want to thank those Member States that continue to provide significant funds and in-kind contributions towards the removal and destruction of chemical weapons material from the Syrian Arab Republic. I am particularly grateful to those Member States providing maritime assistance and support, which have had to deploy in the eastern Mediterranean for considerably longer periods than had been originally envisaged.

Once again, I thank the Special Coordinator, Sigrid Kaag, and all the personnel of the Joint Mission for their courageous work carried out in challenging and dangerous conditions inside the Syrian Arab Republic.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex urgently to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

## Annex

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme" prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 25 April to 22 May 2014 and also covers the reporting requirements of the Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

## Enclosure

### Note by the Director-General

### Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2 (f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") reports to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General. This is the eighth such monthly report.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of this decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2 (f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. This report is therefore submitted in accordance with both above-mentioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to their implementation during the period from 25 April to 22 May 2014.

#### Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

4. In accordance with subparagraph 1 (c) of EC-M-33/DEC.1, the Syrian Arab Republic is required to complete the elimination of all chemical weapons material and equipment in the first half of 2014. Previous reports have described the progress made by the Syrian Arab Republic against intermediate completion dates established under paragraphs 2 and 3 of EC-M-34/DEC.1 for the removal and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons outside its territory. Progress achieved within the current reporting period by the Syrian Arab Republic in fulfilling its obligations is described below:

(a) As at the cut-off date of this report, the total number of movements of chemicals from chemical weapons storage facilities (CWSFs) to the port of embarkation at Latakia remained as it was at the end of the previous reporting period, namely, 18 movements. The Syrian authorities informed the Secretariat that the lack of further movements was due to the inaccessibility of the CWSF holding the remaining chemicals. They further informed the Secretariat that, pending a more permissive security situation, preparatory activities have been carried out at the site concerned following calls from some States parties on the Syrian Arab Republic to undertake preparations at this particular site so that the chemicals are ready for transportation once an opportunity to transport is made available. This included transport by the Syrian Government of required material to the site by chartered aircraft, for which funds have been made available by the OPCW-UN Joint Mission (hereinafter "the Joint Mission"). All material to be removed is now ready for loading into shipping containers for onward transport to the port of embarkation at Latakia. The totals of chemicals removed remain as in the previous monthly report:

96.45% of declared Priority 1 chemicals and 81.09% of declared Priority 2 chemicals (making a combined total of 92.03% of Priority 1 and 2 chemicals) planned for destruction outside the Syrian Arab Republic have now been removed from Syrian territory. In addition, 100% of the declared isopropanol has now been verified as destroyed on Syrian territory. Verification of destruction of the remaining isopropanol was carried out through remote monitoring and sample analysis;

(b) As reported previously, pursuant to subparagraph 2 (b) of EC-M-34/DEC.1, the target date for the destruction of all of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) was not later than 15 March 2014. During the reporting period, no further destruction activities at declared CWPFs were carried out by the Syrian Arab Republic. Activities relating to the destruction of aircraft hangars and underground structures at 12 of the CWPFs are awaiting a decision by the Council on the combined plans for destruction and verification. A team of experts from the Secretariat and contracted personnel from Global Offshore Projects Ltd. (GOP) from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland attended a meeting in Beirut on 19 and 20 May 2014 to discuss with representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic issues related to the destruction of seven CWPFs (aircraft hangars). During this technical meeting, it was agreed between representatives of the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic that a representative from the Secretariat and an expert from GOP would travel to the Syrian Arab Republic between 22 and 27 May 2014 to undertake technical visits to two CWPFs (one single hangar and one double hangar). The information gathered during such visits will support and facilitate the technical and financial evaluations needed for the destruction of the seven aircraft hangars;

(c) Pursuant to paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1, the Syrian Arab Republic is required to submit a monthly report to the Council regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs. The sixth such report was submitted to the Secretariat on 15 May 2014 and made available to the Council (EC-M-41/P/NAT.1, dated 15 May 2014); and

(d) In accordance with subparagraph 1 (e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of resolution 2118 (2013), the Syrian Arab Republic shall cooperate fully with all aspects of the implementation of the decision and the resolution. The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation to the Joint Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in the conduct of its activities during the reporting period.

**Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic**

5. Effective cooperation with the United Nations in the context of the Joint Mission has continued with close coordination between the two organisations and between the offices in The Hague, New York, Damascus, and Cyprus. As at the cut-off date of this report, eight OPCW staff members had been deployed as part of the Joint Mission in Damascus, and one logistics officer in Beirut.

6. The Director-General and the Special Coordinator of the Joint Mission, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, have maintained regular contact. Ms. Kaag visited The Hague on 2 May to discuss the future orientation of the Joint Mission. Recommendations from that meeting were also discussed between the United Nations Secretary-General and the Director-General. Once all chemicals are removed, a limited number of tasks will remain, including activities related to the destruction and verification of CWPFs, as well as possible visits by teams of technical experts from the Secretariat

to Damascus as part of continuing efforts to streamline and complete the data regarding the initial declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic. The Joint Mission will ensure implementation of remaining tasks within a certain time frame. This could be followed, if required, by support from the United Nations through other mechanisms to be agreed.

7. The Director-General has continued to meet with senior representatives of the States Parties offering to host a destruction facility or otherwise providing assistance with transport or destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and to communicate regularly with senior officials from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat has continued to provide weekly information briefings to States Parties in The Hague on behalf of the Director-General.

8. As at the cut-off date of this report, all declared chemicals in the Syrian Arab Republic, except for those chemicals consolidated at one site near Damascus, had been transported to Latakia. Therefore, 11 out of the 12 declared CWSFs had been verified as empty and final inspection reports submitted to the Director-General.

9. As mentioned in the last report (EC-M-40/DG.4, dated 25 April 2014), between 22 and 28 April 2014, a team of technical experts from the Secretariat travelled to Damascus to meet with Syrian authorities as part of continuing efforts to streamline and complete the data regarding the initial declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic in October 2013, and subsequent amendments, as well as the verification work. On return to the Headquarters, the information was analysed and it was felt that the team needed to undertake another visit. Accordingly, four team members travelled to Damascus on 21 May 2014 to hold further talks with the Syrian authorities.

10. As reported previously, the Secretariat, as required by paragraph 13 of EC-M-34/DEC.1, has developed a draft facility agreement for Syrian CWSFs and submitted the draft to the Syrian authorities for their comments, which are still pending.

11. OPCW personnel continued to carry out pre-operational visits to commercial facilities selected pursuant to paragraph 24 of decision EC-M-34/DEC.1 or sponsored by States parties pursuant to paragraph 7 of decision EC-M-36/DEC.2. From 30 April to 2 May, a visit took place in the United States at the Veolia ES Technical Solutions, L.L.C., in Port Arthur, Texas, selected for the disposal of Priority 2 inorganic chemicals through the solicitation process conducted by the OPCW, and at the actual port of Port Arthur. During the visit, OPCW personnel reviewed all practical aspects related to the receipt, transportation, temporary storage, and destruction/disposal of the Syrian chemicals at the facility, and discussed practical arrangements to ensure the adequate verification of these activities in accordance with the draft facility agreement (EC-M-40/DEC/CRP.2, dated 31 March 2014) and the draft arrangements that will govern the verification activities to be conducted by the OPCW inspection teams at the port of Port Arthur. A visit is also planned to the relevant facility in Germany.

**Supplementary resources**

12. As reported in the previous monthly reports, several States Parties are providing assistance and resources for the purposes of the transportation, removal, and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. All equipment requested by the Syrian

Arab Republic has now been provided, either through the Joint Mission or under bilateral arrangements, and all the elements necessary for the removal of chemical weapons from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and their subsequent destruction are now in place.

13. As at the cut-off date of this report, the balance in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons stood at EUR 48.3 million. Contributions have been received from Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, the European Union, Finland, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This includes the contributions that were originally made to the first OPCW Trust Fund for Syria and which have, at the request of the donor, subsequently been transferred, in part or in whole, to the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons. A further contribution of EUR 2 million is expected from Italy.

**Conclusion**

14. While the amount of priority chemicals remaining on Syrian territory is approximately 8%, complete removal of such chemicals is a precondition for the destruction operations to begin. Delays in completing the removal of chemicals have been a source of increasing concern and cast doubts about the feasibility of complete destruction by the 30 June 2014 deadline. It is now crucial to ensure that the remaining, comparatively small quantities of chemicals are removed at the earliest, so that the destruction process can commence immediately. In this connection, it is important to keep in mind the unprecedented undertaking requiring the coordination of several elements, as well as arrangements and commitments undertaken by a number of States Parties for this phase, which has involved complex planning and sequencing, at a considerable cost.

15. As the Council was informed at its Fortieth Meeting on 29 April, the Syrian Arab Republic agreed to the Director-General's proposal to conduct a mission with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegations of the use of toxic chemicals (reported to be chlorine) for prohibited purposes in a number of locations on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. An advance team from the Secretariat travelled to Damascus on 2 May, while the Mission has now reached its full strength with 12 persons deployed. The alleged use of chlorine in the Syrian Arab Republic is of grave concern to the OPCW and the international community. It is now crucial that all efforts are made — by all parties to the conflict — to ensure safe access for the team, enabling it to conduct its important work.